

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 HA-05 TRSE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9924

INFO AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

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USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 5466

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, UNHRC, CI

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH THE UN AD HOC WORKING GROUP VISITING
CHILE

REF: SANTIAGO 5267 (NOTAL)

1. ON JULY 20 I ATTENDED A SMALL WORKING DINNER GIVEN WITHOUT ANY PUBLICITY, ALMOST IN SECRECY, BY THE AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR FOR THE THREE MEMBERS OF THE AD HOC WORKING GROUP, VELIX ERMACORA OF AUSTRIA, ABDOULAYE DIEYE OF SENEGAL, MRS. M.J.T. KARMARA OF SIERRA LEONE, AND MR. VAN BOVEN, DIRECTOR OF THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE IN GENEVA. ALSO ATTENDING THE DINNER WERE THE AMBASSADOR OF FRANCE, GERMANY, NORWAY, CANADA AND THE BRITISH CHARGE D'AFFAIRES.

2. MEMBERS OF THE GROUP UNANIMOUSLY EXPRESSED THEIR APPRECIATION FOR THE EXCELLENT COOPERATION RECEIVED SO FAR FROM THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT. THEY SAID THAT THEY HAD COMPLETE FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT, HAD BEEN ABLE TO TALK TO WHOMEVER THEY DESIRED,
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AND HAD BEEN GIVEN ALL REQUESTED FACILITIES. AFTER TWO MEETINGS WITH THE DIRECTOR OF THE SECRET POLICE (CNI), GENERAL MENA, THE GROUP REQUESTED TO VISIT A FORMER DETENTION CENTER, VILLA GRIMALDI, APPARENTLY STILL USED FOR INTERROGIATION. THEY RELATED THAT THEY RECEIVED PERMISSION TO VISIT AND ARRANGED TO BRING A WITNESS ALONG WHO CLAIMED TO HAVE BEEN INTERROGATED AND MESTREATED THERE RECENTLY. IN THE PRESENCE OF GENERAL MENA THE WITNESS

IDENTIFIED ONE OF THE PERSONS WHO MANHANDLED HIM. WITNESS STATED THAT HE WAS RELEASED AFTER INTERROGATION, BUT WAS IN SUCH BAD SHAPE THAT HE HAD TO BE ADMITTED TO A HOSPITAL. THE GROUP SUBSEQUENTLY VERIFIED THE HOSPITAL RECORDS, THUS GIVING CREDENCE TO THE MAN'S STATEMENTS. IN THE GROUP'S VIEW, GENERAL MENA WAS NOT AWARE OF THESE EXCESSES OF HIS STAFF AND SEEMED EMBARRASSED. HE REPORTEDLY SAID THAT 20 PERCENT OF CNI EMPLOYEES ARE FORMER DINA MEMBERS.

3. DURING A FOUR HOUR MEETING WITH THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR JULY 20, THE QUESTION OF DISAPPEARED PERSONS REMAINED UNSOLVED. THE GROUP WAS GIVEN ACCESS TO THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR FILES ON DISAPPEARED PERSONS, WHICH SEEMED TO BE METICULOUSLY KEPT. IN THE GROUP'S VIEW, THE FILES CONTAIN DETAILED INFORMATION ONLY OF THE ACCUSATIONS MADE BY THE FAMILIES OF THE DISAPPEARED AND OF INQUIRIES FROM FRIENDLY EMBASSIES, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND OTHER AGENCIES. HOWEVER, THERE WAS NO DINA INPUT INTO ANY OF THE FILES AND THUS THEY ARE OF NO VALUE.

4. THE GROUP DESIRES TO OBTAIN INFORMATION FROM GENERAL MANUEL CONTRERAS, FORMER HEAD OF DINA, NOW RETIRED. HOWEVER, THEY HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT CONTRERAS IS NOW A PRIVATE CITIZEN AND NOT AVAILABLE FOR INTERROGATION. WHEN THE MEMBERS OF THE GROUP ASKED THE AMBASSADOR PRESENT FOR COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS, I URGED THAT THEY INSIST THAT CONTRERAS BE PRODUCED FOR INTERROGATION. I TOLD THEM THAT IN MY VIEW THE GOC IS MOST INTERESTED IN A CONFIDENTIAL

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PUBLIC SHOW OF COOPERATION, BOTH FOR INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CONSUMPTION, THUS THE THREAT THAT THE GROUP MIGHT WITHHOLD PRAISE OF THE GOC'S COOPERATION, OR EVEN CRITICIZE THE LACK THEREOF, MIGHT STIMULATE CONTRERAS' APPEARANCE AS A WITNESS. I UNDERSTAND THE GROUP PLANS TO ASK AGAIN TODAY THAT CONTRERAS BE PRODUCED.

5. COMMENT: WHILE SO FAR THE GROUP HAS RECEIVED EXCELLENT COOPERATION, THE INVESTIGATION IS ONLY STARTING TO TOUCH THE RAW NERVE, I.E., THE ROLE OF DINA IN THE PROBLEM OF THE DISAPPEARED. ALTHOUGH IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT MUCH POSITIVE WILL COME OUT OF THE CONTRERAS INTERROGATION, I BELIEVE THAT FOR THE GROUP TO DO ITS JOB IT MUST HAVE A CHANCE TO AT LEAST ASK CONTRERAS SOME PERTINENT QUESTIONS. ON BALANCE, IT APPEARS THAT THE MEMBERS OF THE GROUP ARE SO FAR SATISFIED THAT THERE HAVE BEEN MARKED IMPROVEMENTS IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS FIELD, BUT AT THE SAME TIME THEY NOTE THAT THE INSTITUTIONS PERMITTING RENEWED HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS STILL REMAIN AND THAT MISTREATMENT AND EVEN TORTURE ARE NOT ONLY POSSIBLE BUT SEEM TO HAVE OCCURRED RECENTLY, ALTHOUGH APPARENTLY AS AN EXCEPTION RATHER THAN AS A RULE. THE GROUP IS PESSIMISTIC THAT THEY WILL RECEIVE SATISFACTORY COOPERATION FROM THE GOC REGARDING THE PROBLEM OF THE DISAPPEARED.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT YET DEMONSTRATED TO THE GROUP ANY REAL
DESIRE TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF EACH CASE, EITHER THROUGH EXECUTIVE
OR JUDICIAL ACTION.
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